

# Social Progress

## *The Grounds for Christian Social Action*

by Clifford Earle

## *International Irresponsibility for Refugees*

by Elfan Rees

## *A Response to Billy Graham*

by H. B. Sissel

NOVEMBER

1956

# Social Progress

Published by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to provide a forum for the Church on subjects of social concern for Christians. It includes program resources, legislative developments, and guides to worship, study, and action for leaders of social action groups in local churches, presbyteries, synods, presbyterial and synodical societies. Articles represent the opinions of the

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# From This Vantage Point...

## "IN THE LOCAL CHURCH"

WE ARE accustomed to say that "if it *doesn't* happen in the local church, it doesn't happen."

This is said most frequently about the programs and plans developed by the Board of Christian Education such as the new materials for church officer training and for communicants classes. Here the saying is valid and true.

In such matters as community outreach and social witness, however, we need to insist upon a different slogan—"if it *only* happens in the local church, it doesn't happen."

## MEMORANDUM FOR MINISTERS

Here is an illustration for your next sermon on the Golden Rule. Mr. John Kasper of Camden, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C., is the "outsider" who stirred up trouble in Clinton, Tennessee, in late August of this year about the school desegregation which was taking place in that community.

On Sunday, September 23, Mr. Kasper was in Knoxville to make a speech. He was denied (on supposedly legal grounds) the right to speak in Knoxville. So he and his followers went to suburban Fountain City, where they were denied (again for legal reasons) the freedom of a large public park. Mr. Kasper finally made his speech standing on the bumper of an automobile in a street near the park.

The first thing he said, according to Knoxville papers, was this: "They're treating us like niggers."

"Do unto others . . ."



## DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS QUOTE?

"The Christian community acts within the meaning and limits of its own mission and competence when it speaks, through the mouth of its presbyterial and synodal organs, in important situations in political life, by making representations to the authorities or by public proclamations. It will be careful to select, as wisely as possible, the particular situations in which it deems it right to speak, and it will have to choose its words very prudently and very definitely if it is to be heard. It must not give the impression that it never wakes from the sleep of an otherwise nonpolitical existence until such matters as gambling or the abuse of alcohol or the desecration of the Sabbath or similar questions of a religious and ethical nature in the narrower sense are under discussion, as if such problems were not in fact only on the verge of real political life. The Church must see that it does not make a habit of coming on the scene too late, of entering the fray only when its opinions no longer involve any particular risk and can no longer exert any particular influence. It must see above all that the idea of the Church as the representative of a definitive class-conditioned outlook and morality is not allowed to gain ground, thereby confirming those who already loyally believe in this 'law' and arousing the disapproval of those who are, on the contrary, unable to regard such a 'law' as in any sense eternal. All this applies just as much to the Christian journalism and writing that is carried on with or even without the authority of the Church. Christian publicists and writers must place themselves honestly in the service of the gospel which is intended for all men and not devote their gifts to some Christian fad or another." (For source, see page 20.)

## "ASSIGNMENT CHILDREN"

Danny Kaye took a trip around the world several months ago in the interest of UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund). He visited UNICEF-aided projects in many parts of the world with a skilled movie-production team. The result was *Assignment Children*, an excellent motion-picture film in sound and color which has been showing in commercial movie houses throughout the world.

*Assignment Children* has recently been released in 16mm. for use in schools and churches. It may be rented from the Association Films, Inc., 561 Hillgrove Ave., LaGrange, Ill., for \$5.00.

Last spring I observed several UNICEF programs in Asia and the Middle East. I can report that Danny Kaye's film is almost as good as a personal visit.

—Clifford Earle

# THE GROUNDS

## for Christian Social Action

By **CLIFFORD EARLE**, *Secretary,*  
*Department of*  
*Social Education and Action*

**T**HE theological "ground" for Christian social action is outlined rather neatly in the "preamble" to the social pronouncements of the 168th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. We believe (1) that we live in a world that is under the dominion of God, whose rule is revealed to the Church through Jesus Christ; (2) that both ignorance of God's rule and our refusal to obey him lead men and nations into rebellion against his purposes; (3) that this rebellion results in political and social structures which come under the rule of evil; (4) that neither the Church, nor any judicatory within it, nor individual Christians as members, may ignore or be neutral toward the forces of evil in the world. We believe too that God is acting in the world, though his action may not be manifest, to "consolidate" his reign.

### **The Object of God's Action**

Widespread in the Church is the assumption that the single object of

God's transforming love is personality, that Christ came to reconcile persons, and not the world, to God. We quickly affirm that the good for persons is a primary focus of God's action. We believe, however, that the object of redemption cannot be limited to persons as individuals.

First, on theological ground we confess that all things are created in and through Christ, that he came to reconcile "the world" to the Father. The whole creation, in all its unity and variety, is the object of the redeeming love of God. Christian social action must be concerned not only with the realm of personal and interpersonal relationships, but also with the patterns of relationships, the structures of the social order, which exist in a more depersonalized form among us.

Secondly, an analysis of our culture shows up the interrelationships of a person to his occupational role, to political decisions, to economic



policies in both industry and government. We cannot extract individual persons out of their relationships with other persons and institutions, and hope by dealing with them one at a time to accomplish the full redeeming work of God.

The Evanston Assembly declared that one concern of evangelism is "so to proclaim the gospel that it will transform the groupings and patterns of society in which men and women are involved, to the end that human institutions and structures may more nearly conform to the divine intention."

### **The Nature of the Church**

For our purpose it is useful to think of the Church in terms of the head-body analogy used by Paul in his letter to Ephesians. The Church is "the body of Christ," the instrument or organ through which he uniquely speaks and acts in the immediately present world. Here we emphasize the vocation of the Church as an agent of God's redeeming action.

Now the object of God's action in the world, as we have seen, is not only persons and interpersonal relationships, but also "the groupings and patterns of society." We must think of the Church's calling, therefore, as embracing both the making of "complete disciples" of Christ ("complete" in terms of self-realization and social usefulness) and the changing of the forms and structures of the social order, so that God's already accomplished victory over the powers of evil can become manifest.

The question rises, however, as to how (by what means) the Church

influences the social order. Generally speaking, in two ways:

First, by the witness and work of individual Christians who are nurtured in the Church, who understand something of the relevance of the gospel to daily life and to the issues of life, who seek to clear away some of the blocks to God's action in the world.

Secondly, by the corporate witness of the Church itself, speaking and acting (in its togetherness) as the body of Christ, addressing itself (whether a local congregation which is actually the "frontier" of action, or a General Assembly) to "the groupings and patterns of society," to the end that they may more nearly correspond to God's intention.

The trouble is that many Christians think of the first of these avenues of action as the only one which is proper to the vocation of the Church. They are content to regard the Church (in its local manifestation) as a kind of "spiritual filling station" which equips individual Christians on Sunday to go out on their own and do battle with the devil and his crowd. This happens, or should happen, wherever the Church is faithful in making "complete disciples" of Christ. But to think of this as the one and only way, or even the chief way, by which the Church faces the world and affects the world's life is to miss something that is deeply essential in our conception of the Church's nature and vocation.

The 168th General Assembly concluded its social pronouncements by affirming "that the redemption of the cross is most fully preached when the Church corporately brings to bear the judgment of God against evil

wherever it is seen and seeks at every point of suffering and wrong to reveal the grace of God in the possibilities for salvation, wholeness, and healing; [and] that this is in fact the nature and mission of the Church." This insight is thoroughly consonant both with the Biblical doctrine of the Church (as the body of Christ) and with our Presbyterian heritage from the time of Calvin.

### Education—Action

All that we have been saying has implications for the session and the local church, for the presbytery and its committees, for the General Assembly and its organs. We need to do a lot of rethinking of the structural and relational aspects of social education and action in the presbytery and in the local church.

It should be quite clear (by our understanding of the Church's role in affecting "the groupings and patterns" of the social order) that we are concerned with two functions—(1) the educational process or program by which Christian disciples become socially aware, sensitive, and competent, and (2) the effort of the Church to affect the social order. In the *first* we are thinking primarily of persons whom we wish to be "complete" disciples of Christ, while in the *second* we are thinking primarily of issues and problems in society about which we wish to do something. The distinction is one of focus or attention. We recognize that "social education" happens, and happens best, when people are involved in "social action." But there are times when our *primary* interest is the person whose social attitudes

and skills we are trying to improve, and there are times when our *primary* interest is the social condition we are seeking to transform.

Christian education, as we see it, implies *social education* in the sense that it is constantly aware of the world in which the Church exists and in which Christian disciples live. We miss the point when we think of social education as a branch of Christian education, or as a "program area." True, there are times when an educational activity or program may emphasize some phase of the Church's social responsibility, but we need to think of social education as a dimension of all phases of Christian education.

We are concerned to see that the Christian disciple, by all that happens to him in the Church's program of Christian nurture, is disposed and prepared to be an instrument of God's action in the social order. The end result of Christian education is the Christian disciple committed to the struggle for righteousness in the world and, so far as he can be, involved in it. The "dimension" of Christian education by which this result comes is what we mean by social education.

By Christian *social action* we mean the witness and work of the Church (both corporately and through "concerned" individuals) in seeking to "transform the groupings and patterns of society" so that they may more deeply and fully manifest the divine intention. This means bringing the judgment of God to bear upon evil wherever it is seen, and seeking to reveal the grace of God at every point of human need.



# SOCIAL STRATEGY

## for the Local Church

*By the Staff of the Department  
of Social Education and Action*

**I**N MANY churches social education and action are treated as electives for the few persons, mostly queer, who may be interested. Or they may take a form of a temporary campaign which is pressed with a flurry of activity and then adjourned. This approach tends to deny the essential oneness of Christian social action with the evangelistic and educational tasks of the Church. How can Christian education, for example, achieve its goal of making "complete disciples of Christ" if the whole subject of Christianity's social responsibility is assigned to a separate program in which only a few persons are involved?

A great deal of good is accomplished, of course, through special courses and campaigns even though they mostly attract the "already converted." The Kingdom of God advances when a dozen people in a particular church sit down for a really intensive study of the United Nations as an instrument of peace,

or of some aspect of human rights in the light of the Christian idea of the worth and dignity of personality. Thrilling indeed are reports from the churches telling of the use in small groups of social action handbooks and study guides. Such programs are good, especially when they lead to group action. Let there be more of them. Let every church every year have a period of intensive group study of some aspect of the church's social responsibility.

Still it is true that social education and action happen best when they are a part of the church's ongoing program, when every phase of the church's life contributes to the making of Christian disciples who see the world through Christ's eyes, who by habit size up social issues and institutions in terms of what they do to persons.

### **Beginning in the Session**

Social strategy in the local church begins with the officers—particularly with the "official board" or session.

We dare to suggest that every



regular meeting of the session should include in its agenda an item providing for discussion of the social witness of the church—especially the responsibility of the church with respect to community problems.

One member of the session should be designated as the key person for this area of the session's concern. If there is a local church committee on social education and action, this key person would serve as chairman.

A traditional function of the session is that of receiving new members into the church. The session should see the importance of properly orientating new members with reference to the church's witness in social relations. New members should be helped to understand that Christian faith is relevant to "the issues of life," that Christians are expected to honor Christ in every area of their living, that political and social matters are not out of bounds for the church because the church is interested in everything that affects the lives of men and women and children, that the Presbyterian Church has a record for being outspoken and forthright in dealing with social problems, even the most "sensitive" and controversial.

Another important area of session responsibility is that of orienting and training the officers of the church, including the members of the session itself. In this training appropriate emphasis should be given the church's social witness.

Church officers often express happy surprise when they hear for the first time that the church is trying to do something useful about some of the tough problems in community and national life. This is

an aspect of the church's life and work about which the local leaders ought to be deeply concerned and fully informed.

An articulate member of a local session who is *not* aware of the Church's concern with social problems is in a position to frustrate and defeat an attempt to establish a program of social education and action. We know that this has happened in a great many churches. It is possible also for a powerful but "untrained" trustee of a local church to obstruct the program. In one church, for example, a trustee prevented the use of the social pronouncements of the General Assembly because he thought they came from the General Assembly of the United Nations and he belonged to a "patriotic" organization which was against the UN.

In all this we do not suggest that every church officer must agree with the idea that the Church should engage in social witness, or with the positions that the Church may have taken on certain issues. What is important is that every officer should know he is in the kind of church that is concerned with social problems and is not afraid to take positions on sensitive questions.

### **In the Educational Program**

It is of utmost importance to imbed social education and action in the church's program of Christian education. Here the church goes about the business of making "complete disciples" of men and women, boys and girls, who come within its influence.

When we suggest that social education and action should be imbedded in the educational program,

we do not mean buried or submerged until they are out of sight.

Some leaders in Christian education seem to be satisfied when the social emphasis is present in the materials and in the program by implication. They believe that general and indirect references to some of the social teachings of Christianity are sufficient to make a man sensitive to the spiritual and moral overtones of a variety of social situations. This is wishful thinking.

Christian education, of course, is much more than what happens in church school classes on Sunday mornings. When we talk about the social emphasis being explicit in the church's educational program, we have in mind the church-wide enterprise that includes many kinds of groups and all ages. These activities add up to the church's effort to "make disciples" of all men within reach.

In the well-organized church, the session, which assumes responsibility for the educational program, constitutes a committee on Christian education. This committee sets goals and policies, advises the session with regard to educational curriculum and program materials, nominates the "teaching" staff, determines standards for the age group programs, and in general supervises the educational activities throughout the church. The committee is responsible always to the session, and the chairman of the committee should be a member of the session. Members of the committee should have experience in the various educational activities of the church (men's program, women's association, youth work, Sunday church school) al-

though they do not serve on a committee as "representatives" of these various activities.

The Christian education committee (as well as the session) should designate one of its members as a "key person" for social education and action. This person should see that social education receives its appropriate emphasis in the total program.

Especially important is the orientation of the Christian education staff (Sunday school teachers and leaders, youth advisers, etc.) with respect to the social witness of the church and of individual Christians. Leaders in local church programs of education are sometimes vague and occasionally negative in interpreting the "worldly" dimensions of Christian discipleship. The leader of a large men's Bible class, for example, resisted the suggestion that questions "be opened for discussion" because this would invite the consideration of controversial subjects.

By such leadership Christian disciples in the making are led to think of religion as being unrelated to the real issues of life. All this points up the importance of giving suitable attention to social education and action in the local church's program of leadership training.

### **In the Age Group Activities**

Women's organizations in Presbyterian churches have taken the lead and set a high standard for integrating social education and action in their regular programs. Materials recommended for use in women's groups of local churches deal realistically with a variety of social issues in terms of Christian responsibility.



The approved plan of organization calls for a social education and action key person in the local women's association.

Likewise in the recommended youth program for the particular church there is a key person or chairman for Christian citizenship. A similar "officer" (a key person for civic responsibility) is to be found in many local chapters of Presbyterian Men.

In all of these groups the key person for social education and action (by whatever name he or she is labeled) functions as a member of the program-building team. In this relationship he works with those who carry responsibility in the group for other interests and disciplines such as world service, evangelism, fellowship, and worship.

### **An SEA Committee?**

It would seem that a local church committee on social education and action composed of the several key persons (in the session, on the Christian education committee, in the various age group programs) is a "natural."

The person who carries responsibility for social education and action in the session of the church should be the convener or chairman of the group. The "committee" may at first take the form of an occasional informal meeting of the several key persons to whom we already have referred. In most churches this group would be "formalized" as a regular church committee, responsible to the session, with the session representative for social education and action as the designated chairman. Perhaps other

members would be added who would bring to the committee some special competence (i.e., a high school or college teacher of social science, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, someone skilled in human relations).

Of great importance is the relationship of the social education and action committee in the local church to the Christian education committee. Usually the SEA committee would be set up as a "subcommittee" of the Christian education committee with the session representative acting as the chairman. This is the plan recommended by the Board of Christian Education.

By suggesting that there should be a local church committee on social education and action we are by no means saying that the program of SEA in the local church should be distinct and separate from the ongoing program of the church or should occur outside of the educational program. The purpose of the committee is not to set up a separate program but rather to provide for appropriate emphasis and integration of social education and action in all of the life and work of the local church. The committee's function may be regarded as that of reconnaissance and co-ordination—studying the community, analyzing the issues, "resourcing" the organized groups in the church with respect to social education and action, providing for appropriate church representation in community groups.

The important thing is that social education and action should occur where the people of the church are—in the ongoing program, in the regular activities for men, women, youth.

# The PENNSYLVANIA Story

**L**AST year four presbyteries in the Synod of Pennsylvania became testing laboratories for a pilot project calculated to awaken interest and participation in the social education and action program of the Church.

The idea of running four simultaneous pilot projects based on "pronouncement education" was conceived by the synod social education and action committee under the effective leadership of Rev. Brewer L. Burnett, minister of the Green Ridge Presbyterian Church in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and chairman of the synod committee. For almost six years Mr. Burnett has sparked the development of social education and action in Pennsylvania and, with especial success, in his own Presbytery of Lackawanna. He has made excellent use of the resources of the Department of Social Education and Action, and with the close cooperation of Dr. William Yingling, the synod Field Director, has brought the concern for the social witness of the Church into its due prestige and prominence in the Christian education program of the synod.

The idea of four projects involving Westminster Fellowship groups, church officers, young adult and couples clubs, and church school teachers was evolved at a planning conference during the 1954 meeting of the synod. Is it possible, the group asked, to move presbytery chairmen out of the letter-writing, report-reading concept of leadership to engage with others in projects which encourage corporate study and witness? How is this done with groups which are already a part of the ongoing life of the Church?

**The four pilot projects** were seen not as the solution to these questions, but as a way of exploring for answers. Dr. Yingling, the Field Director, seized upon the suggestion that the social education and action committees of Pittsburgh, Butler, Lehigh, and Lackawanna Presbyteries be asked to administer the projects and report back to the synod committee in the fall of 1956.

Early in December, 1955, the special subcommittee on the projects met in the synod office in Harrisburg to plan the experiment. Dr. Yingling introduced the proposal for the four



projects, and each presbytery reviewed its assignment for the coming months.

In each case the presbyterial social education and action secretary was to assist the presbytery chairman and encourage her contacts in the Women's Organizations to co-operate at the local level. The synodical social education and action secretary, Mrs. Helen Latshaw, of Bethlehem, was a member of the subcommittee and consented to work closely with the experiment in Lehigh.

**The objective** of these projects was twofold:

(1) To introduce and interpret the

social pronouncements of the General Assembly to different groups that normally function in the ongoing program of a local church.

(2) To discover ways of strengthening the relationship between the presbytery social education and action committee and the presbytery Christian education committee to the end that the church's educational program would be permeated with the concerns of Christian social action.

In this "progress report," we describe the projects in Butler, Lehigh, and Lackawanna Presbyteries. The Pittsburgh project is still under way and cannot, at this writing be reported.

## THE BUTLER PROJECT

**I**N NOVEMBER, 1955, the Westminster Fellowship Council of Butler met with Rev. Donald Swinburne, presbytery SEA chairman, and agreed to undertake a project for the purpose of stimulating interest in social action among the youth of the presbytery through a rally and appropriate follow-up.

The Council believed that the youth of the presbytery were most interested in the problems of alcohol and segregation. Accordingly, a rally was planned around these themes. The themes were to be presented by role-playing situations, followed by buzz groups and a summary plenary session.

Follow-up plans included a Westminster Fellowship meeting featur-

ing the rally themes in each local church, the development of a method of determining how much "involvement" in social action resulted in the local church Westminster Fellowship groups following the project, and a "Moderators' Day," when representatives would analyze the project and its effect on their local groups.

The young people decided upon the theme "The Church Speaks." They defined the over-all purpose of the project as being "to inform WF'ers that the Presbyterian Church is not a silent Church on social issues."

**The rally** was held on February 12 in Butler. It was attended by 95

young people from 13 of the 39 churches in the presbytery, a rather good showing for Butler WF rallies. There were an additional 15 adults present, most of whom were ministers or Westminster Fellowship advisers.

At a subsequent meeting of the Council it was the overwhelming opinion of the presbytery Westminster Fellowship officers that the rally was outstanding as compared with many previous WF events.

The following are interesting comments made by the young people of the Council on the effectiveness of the presentations:

### **Assets**

- Interesting themes and presentation
- Participation of nonofficers was good
- Involvement was good for whole group
- People know what General Assembly pronouncements are
- Some know the problems they deal with
- Some know what they say in certain areas.

### **Defects**

- Pronouncements on drinking were never brought out
- A microphone would have helped the role-playing
- Insufficient preparation on the part of those who participated
- Buzz groups were not used as planned—they would have helped
- Insufficient time for role-playing—group discussion was just getting along well when time had to be called
- Insufficient presentation of pronouncements.

Mrs. LeRoy Kuhn, presbyterial adviser to Westminster Fellowship and a skilled worker with young people, declares that this rally aroused more interest and participation among the Westminster Fellowship groups than any previous event in the presbytery.

What about the results of this project? They are both heartening and soberly instructive for the future. "The positive results," writes Donald Swinburne, "seem to me to be that young people who had never before heard of the Department of Social Education and Action or the pronouncements now have a hazy idea about both. They left the rally convinced that as Christian youth they have a nonsegregation obligation, although I fear that the session on alcoholic beverages had little effect."

It is in the follow-up program that the real weakness of this project is exposed. At this writing only one Westminster Fellowship group has held a post-mortem on the rally and has thought through its implications for further study and action. The "Moderators' Day" was not held because of various inconveniences. As a result, the Council had no occasion to suggest ways and means for local groups to move into action in their own churches and communities.

Learning in this area is short-lived without opportunity for recall. Such an opportunity was presented last month at a presbytery officers' meeting, when Mr. Swinburne reopened the social education and action theme with the hope that some of the leaders would see that the imperatives stressed at the rally should be built into their winter programs. No report is presently available on how



many local groups will follow this suggestion.

Mr. Swinburne frankly confesses that despite the fact that the Butler social education and action committee demonstrated the possibilities of a Westminster Fellowship rally on social education and action, the project does not indicate that this method will encourage local study and witness on the part of young people more effectively than others.

The main problem as he sees it is the unfamiliarity of Presbyterian young people with the social respon-

sibility of the Church! "Social education and action," he explains, "is still the stepchild of the Church—among our youth as well as among our adults. For most of the young people of our presbytery it is strange, unchurchly—doesn't quite belong. Because so few ministers are preaching on these themes or are aware of the importance of social concern, there is virtually no encouragement to dig in given to the groups returning to their local churches. At least now we know where our real problem is."

## THE LEHIGH PROJECT

THE project undertaken by the social education and action committee of Lehigh Presbytery began in October, 1955, with a letter from Rev. James F. Anderson, minister of the Presbyterian Church of Catasauqua and the chairman of the committee, to all ministers of the presbytery. Cosigning with Mr. Anderson was Mrs. Helen Latshaw, the synodical social education and action secretary who was associated with him in the planning and administration of the project.

The letter invited pastors to receive the services of the social education and action committee "to put on a program that would introduce the General Assembly pronouncements and explain something of the Biblical basis and areas of concern of social education and action." This was the purpose of the Lehigh project. It was modestly conceived and quietly exe-

cuted by Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Latshaw, who went into the churches of the presbytery with a one-hour presentation designed to introduce the social education and action tradition of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. to young adult and married couples groups. Unlike the Butler project which involved the presbytery Council of Westminster Fellowship, Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Latshaw were the only persons involved in setting up and carrying through this assignment.

It is worth noting that in addition to the letter to each minister a "request for visit" form was sent, which explained the purpose of the visit and asked: name of church; organization to be served; date and time of program; name and address of program; chairman or contact person. The form also had a space in which

*(Continued on page 25)*

# How Green Are the Grass Roots?

I FEEL like a mosquito in the crowds of bathers at Coney," confessed a churchwoman recently. "I don't know where to begin. We have so many problems, where do you start anyway?"

Our advice to both the lady and the mosquito might be to tackle the territory immediately at hand—or underfoot. And for the churches we know about, this beachhead territory well may be the community that they are called to serve and the development of a new alertness to what the church must be and do to minister to the community.

How the entire congregation becomes a fellowship that is socially sensitive and responsible has been clearly set before us in "Social Strategy for the Local Church," page 8. Here we suggest the community as the first line of action and two new program aids for officers and group leaders who want to arouse church-wide sensitivity.

The first is audio-visual. *What Happened to Hannah* is a new film-strip in color and sound just released by the National Council of Churches. It shows what happened to jolt a congregation out of its smug self-righteousness into some vigorous concern for the problems and tragedies in the lives of people around them. When the congregation really *understood* Hannah, the new choir member who sang offkey, and realized what they could do to ease her many burdens, the best people in town, who

were also pillars of the church, saw their community with new eyes. With this understanding the church broke out of its walls and the members really *saw* their community for the first time. Here was service culminating in social action, as church members studied and probed community issues and needs, visited the mayor, and demanded action in the city council.

The filmstrip may be secured from the Department of Social Education and Action, 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pa.

*The Social Ministry of the Local Church*, by Muriel S. Webb, is the second program aid. It deals with the churches and social welfare and suggests how the average local congregation can become "a worshiping, healing, and helping community" in a period of great social change. It suggests ways of studying the crucial aspects of community welfare: the church's ministry to children and families, its care of the aging, the church's concern for health, its work in intergroup co-operation, its role in community planning, and its impact on the total life of the community.

The study guide is available from the National Council of Churches, Department of Publication and Distribution, 120 East 23d Street, New York, at 30 cents per copy.

These program pieces suggest to us that some people may get their first glimmer of social concern by

rolling bandages and visiting shut-ins. But many of them won't really understand what is happening to the people in their town—what God is doing in human events—without some other encounters with human woe. Take housing and neighborhood improvement, for example. Church people can be concerned in a bland, academic way about campaigns for cleaner streets and housing codes, but they won't really understand what housing problems are until they have seen and smelled the slums.

Both of these new program tools show that social service projects are important in enlarging our sympathies and understanding the triumph and tragedy of human existence. They clearly indicate, however, that social service without social action is not a full response to what God requires of men and women who would love and serve him.

**Many denominations**, including our own, are directly or indirectly responsible for a great variety of welfare services—the operation of neighborhood houses, homes for the aging, hospitals and clinics, and chaplaincy services in many institutions. Denominational welfare policies vary widely, and in some communities there are sharp differences among the denominations, as well as in health and welfare councils, over the standards, policies, and methods of financing Church-related social work. Although social education and action committees in local churches and presbyteries have not been too directly involved in these hassles, various forms of social ac-

tion are certainly indicated in the formulation of welfare policies.

The big Cleveland Conference of the Churches and Social Welfare in November, 1955, pointed up the need for major Protestant bodies to develop some united welfare strategy, or at least to reach enough agreement so that their public statements and policies would not contradict each other. A series of follow-up conferences were planned to carve out this strategy beginning with "grass roots" study in local churches and councils of churches, this fall and winter.

We Presbyterians will go to work on our denominational welfare policies and strategy in a national conference next February, and then join with other Protestant bodies in a national conference on the welfare policy and strategy of Protestant Churches, under the sponsorship of the National Council of Churches, scheduled for May 7-10 in Atlantic City.

Local churches often go through the motions of studying important questions without a sense that anybody cares what they think about the issues they are exploring. A great many people will be interested in what Presbyterians believe about Church-related social work—the over-all social welfare policies that are being carried out in American communities. Recommendations and comments, findings, and suggestions from local study groups would be helpful indeed to the staff of the Department. We believe in the grass roots and want to see more evidence that they are growing and vigorous. —**Margaret E. Kuhn**, *Department of Social Education and Action*



# International Irresponsibility for Refugees

By ELFAN REES, Representative in Europe for the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, from the *Ecumenical Review*, July, 1956. Used by permission.

THE preamble to the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees states that "the grant of asylum may place unduly heavy burdens upon certain countries and that the satisfactory solution of a problem of which the United Nations has recognized the scope and nature cannot therefore be achieved without international co-operation."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is the pinnacle of United Nations recognition of the "scope and nature" of the refugee problem. The Convention quoted and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' own Statute are so limited by narrow definitions and exclusions that no more than 2,200,000 of the world's refugees have a claim on the "international co-operation" which the High Commissioner personifies. Even for them, the High Commissioner has had to become an international mendicant pleading for funds to help those most desperately in need. His appeal for a modest \$16,000,000 to finance a four-year program which may well transplant his refugees from camps to real life has so far been responded to by 22

Governments who have paid or promised \$4,175,000.

The United Nations has also assumed international responsibility for the tragic 900,000 Arab refugees from Palestine. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNR WAPNE)—a temporary agency established *ad hoc*—is the only UN agency authorized to provide food and shelter, the basic needs of refugees, for its constituency. Its necessary funds are contributed voluntarily by 23 out of the 76 Governments now members of the United Nations.

Unhappily the tale of United Nations concern and action for refugees does not fully encompass the refugee problem of our age. There cannot be less than 40,000,000 refugees, in the broad human sense of the term, in the world today. At best and often remotely United Nations concern affects no more than 3,000,000 of them. Who are the others and what is their lot?

Since 1945 West Germany has had to provide asylum for no less than 12,000,000 expellees and refugees of German nationality. The remarkable

economic revival of the Republic, resulting by 1955 in full employment, has done much to neutralize the material hardship of these homeless millions. This, however, should not obscure the fact that the political and social consequences of such an uprooting persist as dark clouds over the life of Germany. Housing is still a major problem, and there are at least 3,000,000 German refugees who are not yet integrated into any real community life. The most disturbing fact about the German refugee problem, however, is that the end is not in sight. During 1955 flight from the Soviet sector of Germany to the West averaged no less than 700 persons every night of the year. The figure for the month of April, 1956, was 26,718. Economic revival notwithstanding, this remains a problem that taxes German resources and services to the maximum.

Austria, which in 1950 counted 600,000 *Volksdeutsche* refugees in its population of 6,000,000, has not yet absorbed them all, either into its economic or its national life. Italy and Greece, with their problems of underemployment, can only look to substantial emigration to solve their continuing problems of refugees—evacuees from the former Italian colonies and the survivors of civil war and earthquakes in Greece.

In 1954 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees invited Dr. Edvard Hambro to undertake a survey of the problem of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong. His report revealed that there were 667,000 persons who had fled from Communist China living in quite appalling conditions and constituting 21 per cent of the colony's population.

While recognizing that "the British authorities have not requested any help and made no appeal to the United Nations concerning the problem of Chinese refugees in Hong Kong," the report nevertheless suggested "that an international appeal might be made for a relief fund." The report was received with gratitude and nothing has been done, internationally, to implement its recommendations.

There are refugee problems resulting from the achievement of independence by India and Pakistan involving the displacement of some 13,100,000 people. These problems have not, even yet, been seen in perspective because of the proud and laudable determination of the countries concerned to cherish, as their own, coreligionists who adhered to them. These refugees, however, still constitute one of the many major problems that these new nations have to cope with.

The partition of the Viet Nam in 1954 resulted, *inter alia*, in the flight of some 550,000 refugees from North Viet Nam to South Viet Nam. No official international action whatsoever has been taken to provide for the needs of these arbitrarily displaced persons.

The fact is that the United Nations has not recognized the full scope and nature of the world-wide refugee problem, and far too heavy burdens are laid upon the lonely shoulders of countries of asylum. The only evidence of international co-operation except that of the United Nations cited has been taken recently by the Council of Europe. Following a report and recommendations by M. Pierre Schneider, the Council's Spe-

cial Representative for National Refugees, the Council has decided to establish a special capital fund of some four to five million dollars to help in finding solutions for some of Europe's refugees. It remains to be seen whether the fund will materialize. Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Luxemburg, and Iceland are the only countries who have pledged contributions. With the notable exceptions of the last two, they are all countries that have refugee problems which they have been left to solve alone.

It seems as though the only international agencies that have taken a global view of this "century of the homeless man" are certain of the great nongovernmental organizations. Their concern and compassion are not restricted to categories but are a response to need wherever it manifests itself. The World Council of Churches' Service to Refugees has 69 offices in no less than 45 countries. It values enormously its close and cordial co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency, and Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration, but its concern spreads beyond the limitations imposed upon these agencies.

In accepting the award of the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. G. J. van Heuven Goedhart, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said:

"There can be no real peace in this world as long as hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children, through no fault of their own, but only because they sacrificed all they possessed for the sake of what they believed, still remain in camps and live in misery and in the greatest uncertainty of their future. Eventually, if we wait too long, the uprooted are bound to become easy prey for political adventurers, from whom the world has suffered too much already. Before anything of that sort happens, let us join our hands in an all-out effort to solve their problem.

The tragedy of our century is far from played out. The task it imposes is far from being completed. There are all too many nations and people who have not joined hands—the circle is too small and composed too frequently only of those who bear the burden.

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*Editors Note: The Committee on Resettlement Services reports that an estimated 40,000 visas will not be used under the Refugee Relief Act, which expires on December 31, 1956. The Committee is making a special plea for assurances for single men. There are several hundred skilled men between the ages of 20 and 35 for whom men's groups, young people's groups, or industries are needed as sponsors. The time is short and the Committee needs the help of all the Presbyterian churches. Their address is Room 520, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.*

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The quotation on page 4 is from *Against the Stream*, by Karl Barth. Philosophical Library, Inc., 1954. Used by permission.



# An Open Letter to Life Magazine

## In Response to Billy Graham's

### 'Plea for an End to Intolerance''<sup>1</sup>:

[T IS a cause for rejoicing that Billy Graham, a devout and sincere Christian who influences and commands the respect of so many thousands of his brethren, has publicly stated (some would add "at last") his explicit conviction that racial *discrimination* is contrary to the Bible. One might wish that his condemnation of *segregation* were as explicit, since innumerable white Americans and white Christians believe that enforced race segregation in at least some areas is a normal and natural ordering of our public life, and not "discrimination" at all. But I am grateful even for the implication, if it comes through.

Perhaps the bulk of my response to Dr. Graham's article should be in praise of its spirit, which is truly conciliatory and without rancor, and of the courage and soul-searching that must have preceded it. Like Dr. Graham's preaching, it will undoubtedly bear some good fruit in the lives of many of those who read it. That it will have any significant effect in changing the unhappy and unjust racial patterns that exist in various forms in the North and South, I sincerely doubt.

Many Christians, like myself, believe that Dr. Graham speaks inter-

mittently for God, even in the same sermon. When he speaks in general terms about sin and judgment and salvation, only envy or something worse would cause any Christian minister to deny the authenticity of his message. But when he gets specific, which he sometimes does, particularly on social sin (his term), only blindness or sentimentality would cause one to deny the irrelevance of both his diagnosis and his remedy.

Whether he is discussing racial injustice, juvenile delinquency, divorce rates, or war, Dr. Graham's main emphasis is that all are caused by *sin* (true, but hardly helpful), and his *one* solution is "Ye must be born again" (also true, but again not very helpful). If killing female children were the common practice—the pattern—in great sections of our country and were condoned by public opinion in those sections, contrary to the law and moral consensus of the nation and the Church as a whole, it is doubtful that he would seriously propose spiritual regeneration of individuals as a practical solution. At least not until those found guilty of practicing and publicly advocating infanticide were safely behind bars, where they could be preached to without the tacit assumption that it was bad, but per-

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, October 1, 1956.

missible, for them to go on killing children. (Perhaps this is an unfair comparison, but reliable research indicates that enforced segregation has devastating, though drawn out, effects on many Negro children.)

**With the acknowledgment** that the sincerity and devoutness of Dr. Graham's article will probably bear good fruit in the lives of many readers, I must nevertheless confess my own doubt as to whether its net effect can be good. Many white Christians claim with considerable honesty that they bear no ill will toward their "Negro brethren," and, in fact, love "them," but would do everything within their power short of violence to prevent a Negro family from buying a home in their block, or joining their club, or even in some cases attending their children's school or uniting with their church. (Mr. Jones, in the accompanying *Life* round table, seems quite confident in his conviction that his being a Christian has nothing to do with his not wanting his granddaughter to go to school with a Negro boy.) I am not at all sure that anything in the Graham article would necessarily raise any serious question in such a Christian's mind about the inconsistency of his own attitudes. There is much in the article that might tend to confirm him in them.

It is extremely questionable that "neighbor-love" on the part of individuals, even if in any significant numbers they were willing to accept the power of Christ to practice it, is a useful quality to advocate as a viable solution either to prejudice in individuals or segregation in the social and economic fabric of our

country. (Let us say nothing of those non-Christians who seem to be able to practice this neighbor-love, at least in a racial context, without the benefit of any overt Christian conversion experience.) Even when he speaks of the attitudes and practices of individuals, Dr. Graham is confused on this point, and he could discern the confusion by taking a long, honest look at his own life. "Any man who has a genuine conversion experience will find his racial attitudes greatly changed," he says. Unless he wants to quibble about the meaning of the word "greatly," can he *really* believe that a conversion experience by itself necessarily brings about any significant change in attitudes other than those about which the convert is most troubled at the time?

Is it not true, rather, that Dr. Graham's own racial attitudes (or at least his sensitivities) have changed greatly *since* conversion, even as some people's racial attitudes are changed greatly *without* any conversion experience in the Christian sense? He now refuses to address segregated audiences, even in the deep South. Could he have taken such a stand four years ago? If so, why didn't he? Could he have said on the day of his conversion, some of the things he now says in his *Life* article? If so, why did he wait so long?

**The point is not** that Dr. Graham repudiated his Christian responsibility until recently. I believe he sincerely endeavors to fulfill that responsibility as God gives him to see it. But he is beginning to see it more clearly, not as the result of what are

narrowly called "religious" experiences, but as a result (from the Christian point of view) of the Holy Spirit's working in him through a number of what some would call "secular" experiences. I venture to say that he has had several existential (if you'll pardon the expression) encounters across racial lines; he has traveled widely at home and abroad and has been exposed to viewpoints, Christian and non-Christian, that challenged unconscious assumptions he was previously unaware of having. He has certainly done some reading and has actually seen some of the consequences of segregation in the lives of persons. Two Supreme Court decisions have rocked the complacency of the region of his birth and produced what he calls "worse" race relations; he has been subjected to, and has had the humility to respond to, the prophetic prodding of others like Reinhold Niebuhr who were already sensitized. *In short, history and experience, both of which are arenas of God's activity, have helped make Billy Graham what he is today.* It is highly questionable that his conversion by itself could have done it.

Further, like most of us, he has considerable distance to go yet before he either understands himself or can preach a message that is truly meaningful and relevant to segregation as a social and economic pattern. A good case could be made that a skillful and well-informed agnostic human-relations official accomplishes more for improving race relations, and that the lawyers who argued the five cases before the Supreme Court in 1954 (and whose

religion doesn't immediately matter) did more for racial justice than Dr. Graham gives evidence of doing so far.

Like all of us, he will not be able to accomplish very much along these lines until he succeeds a little more (or at least becomes more aware of his failure) in abstracting himself from all the influences of his geographical origin, his social environment, his economic privilege, and above all his color. "We as white Christians . . . should sometimes put ourselves in the place of the man with the dark skin," he blithely proclaims. And since he regards this as a simple possibility, his inability to do so very well himself, or even be conscious of his failure, is not surprising. As a matter of fact, I believe Billy Graham writes not so much as a Christian whose home is heaven and whose mind is informed solely by the Spirit of Christ, but as a *white* Christian whose home is the South and whose mind is informed by a rather mechanical use of Scripture as conditioned by the (enlightened) values of an economically, socially, and psychologically secure existence.

If he were truly able to speak as a disembodied Christian spirit (who is?) or, more realistically, as a white Christian with some awareness of his own conditioning and limitations, several unfortunate biases would not have crept into his article. For example, he would not have revealed so nakedly that his real concern is "the easing of racial tensions" (tension may be a good thing if it challenges the *status quo*) rather than securing racial justice.



Nor would he have spoken so seriously of "the difficulties which we face" (the "difficulties" being the strife created by the drive of the Negro community for justice and the white reaction to it; the "we" being we whites) as though these "difficulties" of adjustment on the part of whites weigh more heavily than the continuing indignity and suffering of mind and body on the part of Negroes. Nor would he have indulged in so facile an evaluation of Negro self-segregation ("they felt much more comfortable . . . by themselves"). Nor would he have pointed to Honolulu's self-segregated churches (are they really?) as "one of the . . . finest examples of race relations," when there are numerous integrated churches in America where the fellowship of the Holy Spirit has really made people of different races, classes, and cultures "one in Christ." Nor would he have assumed that his eight "practical possibilities," *even if they were practical possibilities* in, say, Money, Mississippi, would make any significant difference.

**But the thing that, for now, really disqualifies Billy Graham from speaking with authority on race relations as a Christian is that he has, with good intention and without awareness, misunderstood and misused his own authority—the Bible.** In the first century, when Christians were being persecuted for their faith, the writer of The First Epistle of Peter wrote to *Christians* (not to Negroes, or Greeks, or slaves, or free): "If when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. . . . Because Christ

also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps." Dr. Graham sees in this text a call (and, in his own words, a warning) "for the Negro"—for the *Negro*, mind you—to obey, to suffer, and to be humble. But to obey *whom* or *what*? God? Or the law of the land as interpreted by the Supreme Court? (Every major denomination has declared that the two are not in conflict.) Or the segregation laws of the states? Or the dictates of the social climate that resists desegregation? Or what?

Presumably Dr. Graham means that the Negro is called to obey *God* and suffer for it. But why only the Negro? Are whites excused (until "both races will be psychologically and spiritually ready for it") from obedience to God and the consequent suffering for that obedience? One wonders how long Negro Christians will endure the one-sided white call to humility, suffering, and obedience before seriously asking whether the Christian faith is regarded as a weapon for delaying justice.

What could Dr. Graham have said in the article? Some of what he did say. But he could have left much of it out and still emerged with grace and humility. It would have been better if he had called *all* Christians *now* to suffering obedience in the fear of the Lord and spelled out what that means. But since this is an extremely hazardous and difficult thing to do, it would have been far better if he had, for now, disclaimed any wisdom on the matter and said simply, "God have mercy on us!"

—**H. B. Sissel**, *Department of Social Education and Action*

# THE PENNSYLVANIA STORY

Continued from page 15)

to indicate what "single area of concern might be most appropriately emphasized in your local church or community situation . . . such as the problem of alcohol, gambling, housing, juvenile delinquency, education, prejudice, etc."

**Out of ninety-three** churches in the presbytery, the social education and action team of Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Latschaw received only twelve invitations to present their program. Most of the church groups were interested in an emphasis on race prejudice. One asked for a special session on juvenile delinquency. Although the team found that it could not restrict its service to young adult groups as originally purposed, most of the organizations visited were in that age group. Perhaps the most successful session was held in the home of a couple who were members of the "couples club" of an Easton church. This group was actually faced with the problem of helping a young Negro family find a home in a neighborhood which had been previously closed to Negroes. The social education and action visitation sharpened the issues and helped several young people who had been apathetic before to become sensitive to their Christian responsibility in the face of discrimination in housing.

What did the team do when it visited a church? Mr. Anderson writes that the format of the presentation was changed as they became more adept in sensing the needs of the audience. Basically the program

consisted of a film followed by buzz sessions. Early in the project a role-playing episode was used, but this was later discontinued when it was apparent that a film was more effective as a conversation starter.

The following is an outline of a typical program of the Lehigh team:

I. The meaning of social education and action

a. What it is

b. Why Presbyterians are committed to it

II. The General Assembly pronouncements

a. Their nature

b. The areas of concern covered

c. Racial justice as a particular area of concern

III. Prejudice

a. What is it?

b. Are you prejudiced?

Here the team distributed the Social Education and Action pamphlet on race prejudice *Vegetables and People*.

IV. Can we immunize against prejudice?

a. A brief description of the film

b. The film. The team used one of two films on this project: *Boundary Lines* or *Can We Immunize Against Prejudice?* The latter was found to be especially useful in stimulating discussion. Both were secured from the Anti-Defamation League.

The program usually ran from an hour to an hour and a half. The lack

of sufficient time to "talk it out" was again seen to be the most serious handicap. In every case the team was careful not to go beyond the allotted time, since most of the groups had consented to make the visitation a

part of their regular meeting.

Mr. Anderson and Mrs. Latshaw prepared a brief questionnaire to help them evaluate reactions. Everyone present was asked to give a yes or no response to these questions:

1. Did you have any interest in social concerns before this program?
2. Have you any interest in them now?
3. Did you know what the General Assembly pronouncements were prior to this program?
4. Do you know what they are now?
5. Do you feel that doing something about social problems like alcoholism, gambling, and prejudice is part of a Christian's responsibility?
6. Had you thought about your own prejudices before this program?
7. Do you feel that you will be more aware of them now?
8. Do you know of anything your own church is doing that might be called social action?
9. If your church wanted to do more, would you be willing to help?

It is interesting to study the following summary of questionnaires received from the first three church groups visited by the team.

#### Evaluation Results Total Responding—47 (from Three Churches)

<u>Question</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Answer</u>	<u>Yes and No</u>
1	42	5		
2	47			
3	8	37	2	
4	38	2	1	6
5	46			1
6	30	14	2	1
7	42	5		
8	21	24	1	1
9	43	3	1	

Mrs. Latshaw recorded some of her own observations at each of the programs. She noted questions asked, shreds of discussion, and varied responses of individuals to the shock of learning that the Presbyterian Church has a social witness. Mrs. Latshaw's comments are interesting and instructive.

She speaks of a woman who, while marking her responses to the ques-

tions in *Vegetables and People*, began to talk about the origin of prejudice toward Jews in her childhood, and wondered why this vague antipathy had remained with her through the years. In one church a man cited examples of his personal relationship with Jews which led to mutual respect and friendliness. The entire group was surprised and inspired by his testimony. A man who



had thought that "New York Negroes" were particularly obnoxious. They received an insight into the qualities of some white people who are pawned in the great urban slum areas, and what the Church should do about such conditions.

Not all of Mrs. Latshaw's comments are encouraging. The team ran into stolid resistance in a few individuals and found no fruitful method of confronting them. One group apparently agreed that "ninety per cent of the Negro race doesn't want anything better than they have and even speak disparagingly of their own race."

The Lehigh team is wary of any prediction of success in the follow-up phase of their project. Thus far eleven of the churches have been visited and there is yet no discernible sign of a ground swell of social education and action in the presbytery. The team expects to continue visiting for as long a time as churches invite its services.

"In almost every case," writes Mr. Anderson, "we have received a letter of appreciation. . . . In one instance the pastor indicated that this was the first help the church had received from the presbytery in social education and action and that the program stimulated thought and

response 'of which we hear day after day.'"

It is not evident that social education and action committees have been formed in the churches visited. One wonders if the team was working with the people who are likely to initiate this move. Young adults are fairly "marginal persons" in many churches and have little power to persuade the session to inaugurate a full-blown social education and action program.

At least one group is dealing with a specific problem in housing discrimination, partly from the overflow of interest and concern generated by the visitation.

The reaction of the presbytery has been favorable. It is likely that as the number of churches visited is increased, more of the ministers will be aware of the contribution this project can make to their program.

The Christian education committee of presbytery has been gratified by the project and commended the team for its work. Perhaps for the first time it is now possible to have the full prestige and influence of the Christian education committee in promoting social education and action and in recommending an adequate follow-up program which will strengthen the social witness of the churches.

## THE LACKAWANNA PROJECT

AT THE time of the organization of the project of the Lackawanna social education and action committee in November, 1955, Rev. James

B. Ollis was minister of the Suburban Presbyterian Church in Scranton and chairman of the committee. Mr. Ollis was subsequently called to be

a student pastor at Indiana University, but was able to see the project to its successful termination.

The Lackawanna project followed generally the same approach as the Lehigh project, except that this effort was directed at church officers. Here again the primary purpose was to acquaint members of the presbytery with the nature and concerns of the General Assembly pronouncements. Somewhat more broadly conceived than the Lehigh venture, the presentation covered a wide range of information and counsel. Opening with a general introduction to social education and action and an analysis of the pronouncements, it quickly shifted to practical helps and techniques for activating social education and action in a local church. Several basic materials from the Department of Social Education and Action were distributed and described to the church officers. A list of eleven "things you can do in your church and community" were presented and discussed. The meetings usually closed with a discussion of practical first steps a session might take to get the program under way. Consequently, the latter part of the meeting, in several instances, became a kind of planning meeting of church officers exploring the possibilities for a social education and action program in their church.

It is noteworthy that the Lackawanna social education and action committee obtained the full support and endorsement of presbytery before launching out on the pilot project. This is the recommended procedure. It is doubtful that Ollis would have received the co-operation of so many persons in this project had he

not fully apprised the presbytery of his proposal and secured its official recognition. This was done in September. In December a letter was dispatched to every clerk of session, asking the session to arrange a visit from a social education and action team to "make a presentation of the Presbyterian program of social education and action."

Although a brief letter such as the one actually used in this case is much to be preferred, it proved to be a rather sketchy introduction to the Lackawanna churches. Only twenty-one out of more than ninety churches responded. Would there have been greater interest if a more complete picture had been given of what the team proposed to do and an explanation made of the importance of its services for the life and work of the local church?

The number of persons involved in the project testifies to the enthusiasm of the members of presbytery and to the thorough preparation made for the project. Ten visitation teams of two persons each were recruited and trained for this project. Most of the teams consisted of one lay person and one minister; women as well as men participated. The pre-visitation training experience was a dinner meeting in one of the Scranton churches followed by a late evening briefing session. At this meeting a typical visitation was role-played. The Presbyterian social education and action tools were reviewed and distributed. The teams were then organized and assignments made.

Team members were expected under Mr. Ollis' leadership, to continue at home their study of the social education and action pro-

gram of the Presbyterian Church.

This was one of the most significant phases of the pilot project. Within a few weeks twenty persons were competently trained in basic social education and action procedures and welded together into a task force of persons committed to this facet of the Church's witness. Chairman Ollis remarked at the Harrisburg meeting of the synod SEA committee: "At least we have now a group of twenty men and women in Lackawanna who can be depended upon to stand behind the social education and action committee and to interpret and support our efforts in this area. This augurs well for the future."

Most of the twenty-one visitations were made to church officer groups in Lackawanna Presbytery. They were of an hour and a half to two hours' duration. John Kleppel, minister of the Canton Church and a member of one of the most active teams said: "Often the most important conversation took place *after* the formal session. There was usually someone who would come up to express disapproval of the Presbyterian position on race, and a lively exchange would ensue with many interested bystanders. Often the church officers asked specific questions about how to get started in their own situations. We were glad, at this point, to spell out some things in detail."

The pattern of the program presented by the Lackawanna teams may be divided into four parts. It began with a lecture which covered five specific points:

1. What are the social issues facing the Church?

2. What do other groups say about these issues?

3. What is our Presbyterian Church doing? What is social education and action, and what is its place in the Christian education program of our church?

4. What are the General Assembly pronouncements, and what areas of concern do they usually include?

5. What has your particular church done that could be classified as social education and action?

After discussion on the above questions, a second member of the team presented a display of social education and action tools and resources. This material and its possible use was carefully explained and sample copies distributed to all present.

The third phase was a presentation by one of the team members of "things you can do in your church." These were down-to-earth, practical ideas, such as:

- Read the pronouncements
- Have a social education and action literature rack
- Form a local committee, etc.

Time was left at the end of this presentation for additional ideas from the group.

The final section dealt with "things you can do in your community." The team tried to encourage the group to talk freely about the community situation—its problems and opportunities for Christian witness. It was at this point that the group began to grapple with the broader concept of evangelism that seeks to transform patterns and structures of community life as well as individual souls. What is our church really doing in this commu-



nity? How can we begin to involve our people in an effective program of Christian action?

Following each visitation, the team filled out an evaluative report which was sent to the social education and action committee chairman.

The following is a brief summary of some of the findings of the teams at the conclusion of twenty-one visits.

To the question "Will a social education and action committee now be formed?", no answer was received from three groups. Five churches out of twenty-one had already appointed either social education and action secretaries (Presbyterian Women's Organizations) or had a local committee. On the recommendation of the presbytery team, four agreed to organize social education and action committees this year, three said that committees would probably be formed, one agreed to refer the matter to session, six had no intention of organizing.

To the questions "What was the general interest in social education and action before the presentation?" and "What was the general interest after the presentation?", the team reports indicate that most of the groups began in the "indifferent" category and moved to "moderate" interest. Of seven groups beginning with moderate interest, three moved to high and the others retained moderate interest after the presentation. Three groups had high interest before the presentation (where social education and action secretaries or committees were organized) and retained that rating. Of six groups beginning with low interest, two moved to high and four to moderate. No

groups were in the low or indifferent category after the presentation.

In response to the question "What use does this group expect to make of the pronouncements during 1956?", the following summary is made:

No use anticipated	2
Women's circle study	3
Church study groups	2
Circulate in congregation	5
Sermons	4
No comment	5

It is perhaps too early to evaluate the real effect of the Lackawanna project. The reliability of the criteria used for an on-the-spot evaluation of each visitation is at least open to debate. Moreover, the real test of the effectiveness of this project, as of the other two, is the growth and development of a social consciousness and corporate activity in the churches of the presbytery.

In the case of this presbytery, where there is already a strong presbytery SEA committee (a \$150 social education and action budget, two annual institutes, and a good core of active leaders), some of this is already in evidence. Several churches that are doing something in social education and action did not request a visit from the team. However, to date no one has ascertained what has happened in the churches that were visited. The presbytery committee is confident that results will definitely be forthcoming.

Although disappointed that there were not many more requests for service from the sessions, Ollis is generally pleased by the success of

the project in reaching many persons "in a direct and personal manner." He feels that one great value is to be found in the fine training given to the ten teams and the spirit of working together as a presbytery task force which was engendered in that group.

"Because of this," he writes, "the every-church visit was probably the

most effective project that our committee has ever tried." He enthusiastically commends to other presbytery committees the procedures used in Lackawanna. "Bucking the ignorance of Presbyterians in this particular department is never easy," Mr. Ollis concludes, "but I am convinced that this is one effective way to go about it."

## RESULTS

IT IS hazardous to draw any broad generalizations from the projects described above. Each presbytery presented its unique problems and opportunities. Any presbytery committee that attempts to follow the procedures recorded here will have to make the modifications necessary for its own situation.

The projects themselves, however, have offered a useful "pilot" experience for the committees that participated in them, if not for others. They have undoubtedly discovered some things about their presbyteries which before they only vaguely suspected. They have tested the basic resource of the social education and action program—the General Assembly pronouncements—on a fairly wide spread of persons from several churches. They have discovered some of the road blocks in the way of helping Presbyterians to understand the main outline of the Church's program of social education and action in a single presentation. Not every presbytery committee has been so instructed. It is devoutly to be wished

that others will strike out on programs similar to these and take advantage of the counsel and experience that is now available by correspondence with those who took part in the experiments.

Perhaps the most important result of this venture was the common discovery of the three presbytery committees reporting that significant personal contacts can be made in the local churches. These contacts can well be utilized in building an effective presbytery team even in situations where it is almost impossible to activate committees in many local churches.

The local church was the target for the Pennsylvania projects. It is unquestionable that the churches visited are now in a better position to move ahead in social education and action than they were before the project. It is now the responsibility of the presbytery committees, co-operating with the pastors, to give them encouragement and assistance in bringing to life a dynamic social witness in the communities they serve.



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